

T H E

MASSACHUSETTS TEACHER.

Vol. III. No. 11.] WILLIAM D. SWAN, EDITOR OF THIS NUMBER. [November, 1850.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.

KNOWLEDGE is the basis of freedom ; therefore, how to gain knowledge and how to impart it, are important considerations to those who, being themselves freemen, desire to transmit the priceless boon of freedom unimpaired and untarnished, to their posterity.

Wealth is the basis of knowledge ; not wealth in the common acception of the term, which enables its possessor to live without labor ; but that degree of it which should ever be the reward of well directed, patient industry ; a sufficiency for all reasonable wants as the result of parental labor, without the necessity of so employing children as to deprive them of ample opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge.

If these propositions are true, then the importance of such a social system as will give to each industrious member of the State this necessary share of wealth, is equally plain.

The first settlers of Massachusetts were educated men ; they acquired knowledge, and they longed for freedom. When they sought these shores it was not only that they might escape from religious persecution, but that they might also become *freemen*. They scorned the dogma of "the divine right of kings ;" and if they did not proclaim, they felt and acted upon the great truth, that "all men are born free and equal." That freedom for which they became voluntary exiles from their native land, they found on these shores, and the means by which they transmitted it to their children were, INDUSTRY and EDUCATION. These means were sufficient in their hands, and it is for us to see to it that they lose none of their efficiency in ours, for we shall not stand excused unless we fully pay to our children the great debt we owe to our fathers.

From the days of the pilgrim-fathers to the days of our fathers, industry and education have gone hand in hand together. As population has increased so have schools been multiplied, and the higher seminaries of learning endowed and encouraged, while the fertile brain and the ever ready hand, have been constantly employed in providing the means to sustain these and other institutions for the general welfare, by adding continually to the wealth of the State and the ability of its citizens.

Hitherto the great diversity of pursuits demanding our attention — commerce and navigation, the fisheries, manufactures, and the mechanic arts — have presented a field so ample for labor, that every industrious man has been able to reap an abundant harvest, sufficient not only to supply his own wants, but leaving a surplus in his hands to be disposed of for the public good; and it is because of the prolific returns from these pursuits that the most reliable source of wealth, in this and in every country, has been too much overlooked and neglected.

That source of wealth is AGRICULTURE. To say that we have made no progress in this direction would be untrue, but it is true that our advance in it is very moderate when compared with what has been done in other pursuits. In navigation our forefathers performed a wonderful exploit, when they built that first little shallop, "The Blessing of the Bay," to cruise between Plymouth and Boston; but now, our stately ships, unsurpassed in workmanship, beauty, burthen, strength, and all good qualities, navigate not only the Bay of Massachusetts, but carry the flag of freedom to distant oceans and make themselves familiar things in all parts of the world. Our whale-fishery, once confined to a few boats from Nantucket, scarce venturing where land could not be seen, now employs a magnificent fleet of well appointed ships which scour the great Pacific from Cape Horn to the frozen regions of the South, defying all competition, and bringing home millions of wealth annually. Our Fisheries have increased in like manner, and the banks of Newfoundland, the Bay of Chaleur, and every bank and bay in the Atlantic Ocean where fish resort, are as familiar to our numerous and hardy fishermen as their own homes. Our Commerce, timidly commenced with a small schooner laden with Yankee notions, such as lumber, fish, and onions, for the West Indies, now spreads to every port in the world near and far; there is not a port where traffic is permitted, but is visited by Massachusetts ships, and known to Massachusetts merchants. Our manufactures, once confined to the spinning wheel and the house loom, have become the stay and the staff of thousands and tens of thousands of our people, whose great skill and industry have enabled them to distance competitors and to obtain a reasonable reward for their labor.

If we could hope always to retain our superiority in these pursuits, we might go on neglecting our own soil, and bartering the products of our labor for the bread of other lands. But it may not be. What is profitable to us, if pursued with the same skill and industry, will be equally so to others. Rivals we shall have — competitors in all things our equals, and in manufacturing especially, the victory will finally rest with those who can obtain the raw materials cheapest. Already our sister States of the South, instead of exhausting their breath in vituperations against the protected manufactures of the North, are following our example. In Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama, manufactories are daily springing up, and even in South Carolina, is a large and flourishing establishment for turning the cotton which grows on the land into cloth to be worn on the spot. For a time our superior skill, greater capital, and indomitable perseverance will give us great advantages over these beginners, but even these will have to give way at last before cheaper material, cheaper food, cheaper labor, and a market for their goods at their own doors. Our extended whale fishery is becoming yearly more precarious and more dangerous; it has reached its maximum, and in all probability will soon begin to decline. Our cod and mackerel fishermen have found a powerful rival in the people of Nova Scotia, who have this great advantage over us, that they can catch the fish in their own harbors without employing costly vessels expensively fitted, as we are obliged to do.

The day is coming then, when our present great resources will be narrowed down; when the profit on our present employment will be curtailed; when the knowledge imparted under our existing system of education will be insufficient to enable Massachusetts men, on Massachusetts soil, so to dispose of their labor as to earn, as they now can, a surplus beyond the supply of their reasonable wants; when our children, it is to be feared, will be kept from school and compelled to labor for physical instead of intellectual food; when the brightest and best, the most intelligent and enterprising of our citizens will seek relief in expatriation. If there is any fear of such a result — and who that takes a broad and impartial view of the subject will say there is not? — then it becomes us to examine well our own resources, to see what of them are neglected, and to adopt the means, if means there be, to avoid the threatening evil.

And have we not one great resource left; neglected hitherto, and therefore presenting the more room for improvement now? With proper cultivation the SOIL of Massachusetts will maintain in competence double the number of her present population; and as every tiller of the soil adds one to the consumers

of all other productions, so will the thrifty increase of our rural population give employment and strength to every other pursuit. But our present system of education does nothing for this great interest ; it has not shed the first ray of the light of science upon agriculture, and our farmers know but little more of the nature of the ground they cultivate, of the best means and appliances to make it productive, than their fathers knew a century since. We educate our children for every other pursuit in life but this ; commerce, manufactures, mechanic arts, the learned professions — to all these the door is open free and wide, but where in Massachusetts shall a child go to learn the *science* of agriculture. In Europe an acre of land scientifically cultivated, will well support a man ; what will it do under our cultivation ? And why shall Massachusetts, the successful rival of the old world in all other of the industrial arts, be so much behind in this, the most important of all.

And yet, neglected as it has been, agriculture, even here and now, is the most certainly productive of all our pursuits. It is said, and facts are recorded to bear out the assertion, that nine out of ten who embark in commercial affairs are unsuccessful, while of those who follow agriculture about the same proportion do well. And if this be true now, how much more probable still would be the comparison if agriculture were to have the aid of science, and if equal talents, intelligence and education were employed in it.

But the gains of agriculture, though certain, are slow ; it holds out no brilliant prospects ; no hopes of a fortune to be made in a few years ; no wealth to be created out of a single bold speculation. It has, moreover, no scientific attractions ; it has not been presented as a science or pursued as a science. The man of enterprise, and the lover of science are equally taught to shun it, as too slow and unyielding for the one, too barren of results for the other.

All that Massachusetts has yet done for agriculture is to be found in bounties paid for a few years on the production of wheat and silk, and annual donations of a few thousand dollars to county agricultural societies ; in the one case stimulating for a time the culture of articles not the best adapted to our soil and climate, in the other holding out trifling rewards for superior specimens of crops, the result of meritorious but isolated experiments, and for the most part unattended by any explanation of means or appliances which can be of general benefit. We want something more than and beyond this ; we want something that in a great degree will supersede these experiments. Pour water upon the top of a hill and its whole surface may be improved and rendered productive ; pour the same water at the base and it will have no effect upon the fields above. We want

institutions which will commence operations in the right place by instructing children in agriculture as well as in all the arts and sciences which are useful in that pursuit ; which shall furnish such an education that a young man who has acquired it may be able to cultivate his land to the best advantage at once, instead of wasting the best years of his life on hap-hazard experiments which have no scientific base, and are quite as likely to end in failure as success. We want institutions which will tend to direct enterprise, energy and genius to the cultivation of the soil, instead of turning the possessors of these faculties and qualities to any other pursuit in preference.

It is a mistake, a very fatal mistake, to suppose that any man with any sort of an education, or with none at all, may be a farmer. Any man, it is true, can perform the ordinary labor of a farm, so he can dig the earth for silver or gold ; but he wants something more than physical power, in either case, to command success. Any man may become an accomplished mineralogist under our present system of education ; he may be so instructed in that science that he will never throw away his labor in searching for gold where gold never was, but in the ten thousand times more important science of agriculture where shall he go to get one ray of light ? Where shall he go to obtain such instruction as will enable him to labor without loss ?

It is no part of the writer's present purpose to propose a plan for, but simply to call attention to the necessity of agricultural education, as to a matter of the highest importance which has been too long neglected. It is worthy of serious attention, not only from farmers, but from men of all pursuits who desire to sustain our Commonwealth in her present commanding position. We have able, intelligent ministers, physicians, lawyers, merchants, mechanics—and the means of producing more in abundance ; let us add to them intelligent, energetic, *scientific* farmers, and then—not before—shall we have imparted the full benefits of education to all our citizens. Then, and not before, shall we have paid to our children the full value of the legacy left to us for transmission by our fathers.

THINK OF THE FUTURE—Said an ancient Sculptor, when asked how he could bestow such untiring labor upon a block of mere marble, "I work for eternity." Does any one ask the Teacher how he can labor on with patience and hope amid so many impediments, he may reply, with more truth than did that noble artist, "I work for eternity." Mounds of earth and monuments of marble shall pass away ; but impressions made upon the deathless spirit, like scars upon the oak, become a part of itself, and abide forever.

POLITICAL ECONOMY.

WE hope that our readers will not be alarmed. We are not about to enter the field of politics, but merely to discourse a while upon a *Science* which is but little and should be better understood.

Political — or as Mr. Colton well calls it — Public economy, is a Science; and on a proper understanding of it depends — vastly more than may be thought at first sight — not only our prosperity as a people, but the success of all education: for competence among the masses is essential to such success, and it is the part of this economy to show how that competence shall be attained.

This Science is taught — rather, we should say, professed to be taught, in some of our higher seminaries; but it is not too much to assert, that the teachers themselves do not possess the knowledge which they profess to impart, and hence it follows that the learners gain but little benefit from their efforts. A work of some value on this subject, has recently been published by Judge Phillips, of Boston, and the learned author says in his preface: — “It has not happened to me in thus devoting my attention more particularly to these inquiries, as it did some thirty years ago. Being then imbued with that economical creed which is taught in our public seminaries, I had occasion to attempt its vindication against the aggressions then supposed to be made on commerce by the useful arts, through protective legislation; and I had the good fortune, or misfortune, on investigating the subject anew, *to convert myself to the opinions I had undertaken to combat.*” He made the discovery that all he had been taught was wrong — that it “consisted very much of groundless postulate and sophistry.” But he did not discover, or if he did, he does not mention it, why this erroneous system was introduced and continues to exist.

In this Science, as in other Sciences, we look for light to the great minds of the old world. We import and study the works of the most celebrated authors of Europe, and we feel safe in adopting their conclusions. We forget, or overlook, the most important element in the case, which lies right in our path, and must be carefully examined before we make the first step: we forget that we are not a part of the old world — that our people, our government, our social system are “*sui generis.*” We leave out of sight especially, the important fact that labor in this country is *twice as valuable* as it is in Europe; that whatever tends to keep up this difference is the true policy for us, and that whatever tends to depress the value of our labor to old World prices, is the wrong policy for us. If our people were obliged to work for

the miserable pittance which the masses of Great Britain are glad to obtain for their labor, what would become of education, where should we find the means of support for our free schools? It is, as we have said, the province of this science to teach us how to maintain the value of labor, to prevent the ruinous depression we have alluded to, and to give us the means whereby to live not only, but to educate and spiritualize the rising generation; to prevent our own children from becoming mere human machines, and to raise the children, at least, of the human machines we import every day by hundreds, into the rank of free, educated, thinking men.

If we have stated the case clearly thus far, our readers will be satisfied that we have not over-stated the importance of *American* public economy as a branch of education. Within the limits which we may be allowed to occupy in this Journal, we cannot present a full view of the subject, of course; we can do but little more, in fact, than call attention to it; and we shall be content with doing so much, though we can hardly close without a few words more in support of our position.

It is most deeply to be lamented that a matter of so much importance should ever have been made the football of politics; and most strange it is, that in a question which affects the well-being of all parties and all men equally, there should be found those who will take sides upon it without the slightest examination of its merits, and express opinions this way or that way, merely because this way or that way is, or is not, whig or democratic doctrine. It should never have been made a political party question, and we trust that the day is coming, if it has not already arrived, when men of all parties will agree with us in this opinion.

To return to the subject:—all modern European writers of much note are “free traders;” that is, they advocate the principle that perfect freedom of trade is best for all the world; and this is the system of economy which is taught in our seminaries. But it is perfectly plain that if this system were to be adopted by all the world, the value of labor in all countries would be very nearly equalized, and as the higher body of water, when all obstructions are removed, will fall into the lower, so would our higher wages of labor sink to the lower level of the old world. The answer to this is, that we should lose nothing thereby, because our reduced wages would buy as much of the necessities and superfluities even, then, as our higher rate will buy now. We have not space to refute this assertion at length, but we will simply inquire why—if this be true—why English and Irish wages do not give this same advantage to the receivers of them? Why there is such a difference in the relative situation of the great mass of the people of Great Britain

and the great mass of the people in these States? By reducing the value of our labor to his, the working man of England would not be able to buy one article he uses cheaper than he now gets it—not even bread; and how would he be benefitted by the change? And all that we could possibly gain in prices, would be the difference of import duty on foreign productions, which, after all, we should have to pay in some other shape in order to support our government. To adopt this system, then, would lead to a great and certain loss without any equivalent, and therefore it is manifestly not the system for us—not the true American system, which should be taught in our seminaries.

What we desire to see in this science is, an American system, to be taught not only in our colleges, but even in our schools; for it may be so simplified as to be made comprehensible to the understanding even of children who are far enough advanced to be first class scholars. But how this is to be done, and who is to do it is an unsolved problem.

CINCINNATI SCHOOLS.

It was our good fortune to be present at the annual examination of two of the public schools of Cincinnati, in June last. One under the charge of MR. DAVENPORT, in the Seventh District; the other, the Central School, of which MR. H. H. BARNEY is the Principal.

In these schools the pupils gave evidence of thorough training. They were examined by a committee appointed by the Trustees of the Common Schools, and gave ready and intelligent answers to the questions proposed to them. There was no special preparation for the occasion, no mechanical recitations from the text books, but in all the exercises, the pupils gave evidence that they had been taught to think for themselves. The active faculties of the mind had been aroused. The fire had been kindled within. In training the minds of children, teachers sometimes mistake the shadow for the substance. They cultivate the memory too much. To sit and listen passively from day to day to the same dull routine of readings and recitations, is not teaching. The mind must be trained to work out an education for itself. There must be constant thinking. Intellectual culture cannot succeed without it. The mind requires daily food it is true, and this it receives from books and oral instruction, but the food must be well digested. Mental digestion, the exercise of the reflective powers of the mind,

is as essential to its healthy and vigorous growth as physical digestion is to the body ; and the proper training of the mind in this respect constitutes a large part of the teacher's task. In these schools the true method of instruction had evidently been successfully pursued. The children appeared cheerful and happy, and showed that they not only took a deep interest in their studies, but in every thing which related to the reputation and welfare of the school.

The compositions and declamations in the Central School, were of the highest order. At the close of the exercises, a presentation of valuable books was made by the pupils to the teachers, as tokens of their gratitude and respect.

The people of Cincinnati take a deep interest in their schools. They are very proud of them, and have reason to be so ; for, in many respects, there are but few schools in the country that maintain a higher rank.

The Report of Mr. Barney to the Trustees of the Schools, is an able document. The following extract will be read with interest by every practical teacher.

MODE OF CONDUCTING RECITATIONS AND DUTIES OF TEACHERS

IN THAT RESPECT.

1. They shall endeavor to understand thoroughly whatever they attempt to teach, so as not to be constantly chained down to the text-book. To this end, they shall make such special preparation for each lesson, that they could recite it themselves, as readily and accurately as they would desire their pupils to do it.

2. They are to teach the subject, and not the book ; to point out the practical bearing and uses of the thing taught, and make it so familiar by repetition, as to fix it deeply and permanently in the mind ; for what is worth learning at all, is worth learning thoroughly and completely.

3. They are to assign no larger portion for each recitation, than the class, with due diligence, can easily master, and then insist upon its being learned so perfectly that it can be repeated without the least hesitation. Until this is done, no new portion is to be given out.

4. They are to explain each new lesson assigned, if necessary, by familiar remarks and illustrations, that every pupil may know, before he is sent to his seat, *what* he is expected to do at the next recitation, and *how* it is to be done, to the end that he may study understandingly, and therefore successfully.

5. They are to require all rules and definitions, together with the more important parts of each subject of study, to be accurately committed to memory, and the whole *wrought* into the *understanding* as well as the *memory* of the pupil, by

questions and familiar illustrations adapted to his capacity, until he has completely mastered it.

6. They are not to use, during recitation, the text-books themselves, excepting for an occasional reference, nor permit them to be taken to the recitation seat to be referred to by the pupils, except in the case of a parsing exercise, the translation of a language, or the solution of mathematical problems; and even in the latter case, they are required to assign many problems of their own preparing, or those selected from kindred text-books, involving an application of what the pupils have learned to the business of life; for the reason, that they will be likely to possess more animation themselves, and enkindle a correspondingly increased vivacity and spirit in the minds of their pupils, than if obliged to follow the very letter of the book.

7. They are to understand many more subjects than they are required to teach, that they may be able at all times to give much oral, collateral, and indirect instruction, and be furnished on every subject with copious illustration and instructive anecdote. To this end, they are expected to pursue, daily, a regular course of professional reading and study.

8. They are not to do for their pupils what they, with proper explanation, can do for themselves, or what some member of their class can do for them: they are not to carry their explanation so far as to supersede the very effort on the part of their pupils, which it should be the design of such explanations to encourage; but they may diminish or shorten difficulties, divide and subdivide a difficult process, until the steps become so short, that the pupil can take them without difficulty.

9. They must endeavor to arouse and fix the attention of the whole class, and to occupy and bring into action as many of the faculties of their pupils as possible. They are never to proceed with the recitation without the attention of the whole class, nor go round the class, with recitation, always in the same order, or in regular rotation; but to change the order frequently, selecting here and there a pupil, who may chance to be listless at the moment, so that all may be compelled, as it were, to be attentive, and ready to recite at any moment.

10. They are to exhibit proper animation themselves, manifesting a lively interest in the subject taught, avoiding all heavy, plodding movements, all formal routine in teaching, lest the pupil be dull and drowsy, and imbibe the notion that he studies only to recite, using his text-book as mere words, and having but little idea of any purpose of acquirement beyond recitation.

11. They must require of their pupils, at all times, prompt and accurate recitations, under penalty of detention after the close of the regular School hours, to make up the *deficit*. They

are to endeavor to use language fluently and correctly, and to acquire a facility at explanation, a tact at discerning and solving difficulties: they must endeavor so to unfold, direct, and strengthen the mind as to bring out all its powers into full and harmonious action, and so to superintend the growth of the moral, mental, and physical faculties, as to develop them symmetrically, and to fashion the whole into beauty and loveliness as they grow.

12. With respect to most subjects of study, they are required to have their pupils recite by *analysis* — that is, to give, in their own language, a general outline, a consecutive synopsis of the subject matter of the lesson; to be followed by general, appropriate, original questions, pointing out and illustrating its practical bearing, exciting curiosity, and awakening thought; but in no case are the questions in the margin, or at the end of the sections in the text-books, to be used, excepting for the purpose of an occasional review.

13. They are to keep a daily record of the merit of each pupil's recitation, his deportment, cleanliness, and the number of times absent or tardy; the quality or merit of each recitation or exercise being marked at the time of its performance, on a scale varying from 10 to 0; 10 denoting perfect, 8 good, 6 tolerable, 4 quite poor, and 0 an entire failure; to make a monthly abstract of the same, and transmit it to the parent or guardian, to be signed by him, and then returned by the pupil to his Teacher.

14. They are not to rely too much upon simultaneous recitation, as it often takes away all individuality, making the pupil superficial, by causing him to rely on others, tempting him to indolence, by preventing his deficiencies from standing out by themselves, and consoling him with the reflection that he has been able to conceal his want of thoroughness. It may be resorted to, however, for the purpose of giving, occasionally, variety to the exercises, of arousing and exciting the class when dull and drowsy, or for the purpose of fixing in the mind important definitions, useful tables of weights and measures, the declension of nouns and pronouns, the conjugation, synopsis, and inflection of verbs, etc.; and also in certain spelling, reading, elocutionary, or orthophonic exercises, where the object is to embolden the pupils, to induce them to let out their voices, that their muscles of articulation may be strengthened, and all the vocal organs become well developed, and the voice rendered full-toned, firm, and harmonious.

15. They must not attempt to teach too many things at once, nor allow their pupils to direct their own studies, nor attend to extraneous business in School hours, nor occupy too much time in conversing with visitors, nor make excuses to visitors

for the defects of their classes, nor use low and degrading epithets, nor wound the sensibilities of a dull scholar by disparaging comparisons.

16. They are required to see that their pupils move to and from the recitation room in a particular order, and always occupy the same place on the recitation seat, that if any one be absent, it can be detected at once, and the cause, if necessary, be immediately inquired into, and the proper entry made in the class register, without calling the entire roll.

17. To avoid those dull and dragging recitations, which always abate the interest of a class, and sooner or later create a disrelish for study, they are not to allow the pupils to prompt each other, nor help the class themselves by unseasonable suggestions or continual hints, or by what is termed the "drawing out process," which always reproduces the very dullness which they seek to remedy, the very imperfection which they desire to remove; but they must refuse to proceed until the recitation can go alone, progressing briskly from pupil to pupil, passing by those who hesitate and falter, until the whole lesson is finished; for it is as easy to have good lessons as poor, if Teachers have the energy to insist upon it, and it is a great saving of time to have the lessons promptly recited.

18. They are enjoined to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with some work on mental philosophy; because education, more than any thing else, demands not only a scientific acquaintance with mental laws, but the nicest art in the detail and application of means for its successful prosecution; because there is a natural order and progression in the development of the faculties, a principle running through every mental operation, without a knowledge of which, and how to apply it, the Teacher cannot know beforehand how to touch the right spring, with the right pressure, and at the right time; because it is indispensable that every Teacher should know by what means, by virtue of what natural laws, the human faculties and powers are strengthened or enfeebled — should know that each faculty has its related objects, and grows by being excited to action through the stimulus or instrumentality of its appropriate objects, and is thereby strengthened so as to perform its office with facility, precision and despatch; and because the Teacher, like every other workman, should understand the natural propensities, qualities, and power of the subject matter of his work, and the means of modifying and regulating them with a view to improvement, — otherwise, he would be continually liable to excite and strengthen the wrong faculty, to touch the wrong spring of action, and to promote animal and selfish propensities, instead of social and moral sentiments. "No unskilful hand should ever play upon a harp, where the tones are left forever in the strings."

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE.

ONE of the greatest obstacles to success in keeping a good school, arises from the irregular attendance of many of the pupils. The recitations in our large schools are for the most part conducted in classes; consequently every absence is not only a hindrance to the individual absent, but it retards the progress of the whole class. All teaching to be effective must be thorough. The steps that are taken must be gradual and certain. Our text-books are so arranged, and the course of instruction is such that no recitation can be omitted without serious injury to the pupil, who will experience the want of it in all his future progress. The connecting link in his chain will be broken; and the class must therefore wait for him to go over the ground, or his education will be imperfect. Most of the absences that occur in the schools, may be traced to the carelessness or indifference of the parents; and this arises from a want of knowledge of the magnitude of the evil. Some are influenced by their affections, and yield readily to the wishes of their children, granting them permission to be absent for trivial causes whenever they desire it. Others have not sufficient control over them to compel their attendance. Many plans have been adopted to remedy this evil, but we have seen nothing which pleases us so much as the following Circular issued by the teachers of the public schools of Providence, and sent by them to the parents of absent children. From a recent conversation with the teachers we learn that it has been productive of much good. The teachers in Providence have long stood in the front rank, and we have taken the liberty to copy their circular, that it may be used in other places.

"PROVIDENCE,

1850.

Mr.

As the results of the relation which a scholar sustains to his school, are determined in a good measure by himself and by the influences exerted upon him at home, permit me, in view of your power and interest in promoting the education of your children in connection with this school, to invite your attention to the following considerations and suggestions:—

THE EVILS OF ABSENCE.

1. TO THE SCHOLAR.—The scholar, who occasionally absents himself from school, thereby fails to enjoy all his privileges, and to secure to himself all the benefits of his relation as a scholar: he neither receives systematic instruction nor acquires correct mental discipline: he fails to form habits of thorough-

ness, accuracy and continuous effort for want of the requisite practice : he fails to acquire a good knowledge of Arithmetic and other elementary branches by not pursuing them in their proper order and connection : he fails to acquire preparation for the duties of life by failing to perform the duties of school.

But the evils which result to the scholar from absence do not consist alone nor chiefly in his loss of advantages ; they rather consist in injuries done to his character. Irregular attendance injures his moral habits and feelings ; it chills his interest in study, disappoints his hopes, tries his patience, wounds his pride and checks the genial flow of his spirits ; it lowers his estimate of school privileges, and consequently produces carelessness, and indifference to school duties and obligations ; it causes idleness, and is a prolific source of mischief and trouble in school ; and it not only retards the pupil's progress while there, but extends its influence to his maturer years : discouraging all efforts to enlighten and improve his mind. The evils of absence are best illustrated by an example.

A scholar, belonging to a large class, has been absent from school some time, during which important principles in Arithmetic, and other studies have been taken up in course, and illustrated. To day he is present, conscious of his loss and unable to solve his problems and understand his lessons. He has, at times, been interested in his studies and ambitious to maintain a respectable rank in his class. But now, having lost his standing, and acquired a lively interest in pursuits disconnected with school, he has no inclination for study, nor resolution to encounter difficulties in his lessons. He attempts, for a while, to pass along with his class, and is strongly tempted to make up in deception what he lacks in knowledge ; but often failing to recite, and, at length, entirely disheartened, he sinks, into the next lower class, and there, with little ambition "but to get rid of study," he becomes a burden and a trouble to the school. He was at first reluctant, then willing, but now heartily desires, to be absent. Excuses are easily framed, and, by parental indulgence, he is gratified. Passing by his truancy and other kindred vices, which he learns to practise unscrupulously only by taking lessons in the high-ways and by-ways of our city, he advances, step by step, in his downward course, led and controlled by a spirit, distinct from school, until, too late for help, his parents open their eyes and wonder at the result ; wonder, forsooth, that, instead of turning aside to seek the refined pleasures of moral and intellectual culture, he has yielded to the out-door influences prevailing around him, and acquired corresponding bad tastes and habits. As reasonably might they wonder that the laws of God are not suspended, and a miracle wrought for their special benefit.

This example is adduced in no fault-finding spirit. Many parents make great efforts and sacrifices to send their children regularly and punctually to school, and many children are never absent from their school, unless constrained by duty or necessity. Some of the legitimate consequences of absence upon the scholar, are here stated, and others are to be observed, particularly at our quarterly examinations, where failures not unfrequently occur, mortifying alike to the scholar, the parent, and the teacher. The suggestion is here respectfully offered that no thoughtlessness or indiscretion shall be allowed to contribute to results, which are thus unpleasant and injurious.

II. TO THE SCHOOL.—The evils of absence extend far beyond him who occasions them. The school suffers as well as the scholar. Thus, in a large class, some of the scholars are absent to-day, and some to-morrow, until in the course of a few days, half of the class have passed over some lessons unlearned, and some principles uncomprehended. What shall be done? 'Let the evils fall on those alone who occasion them.' But this is impossible: the classification of the school must be preserved, or its usefulness and efficiency are at an end. The only course to be adopted under these circumstances, is to allow the evils to fall on the class at large: weighing, of course, particularly heavy on the irregular members. The more regular and advanced scholars must conform their movements to the lagging pace of their irregular and inconstant classmates. Those present must be hindered by those absent. The time of the former must be taken up in listening to explanations, repeated for the sake of the latter: their ardor in study is consequently cooled, and their progress checked.

Scholars are sometimes unavoidably detained from school; and then they are not responsible for the consequences of their absence. They can then only render their excuses in accordance with the regulations. But absence cannot always be accounted for in so satisfactory a way. Seats are vacated, because it is warm or cold weather; because it rains, or may rain; because lessons are hard, or easy, because scholars wish to visit, or be visited; to attend an excursion, or prepare for an exhibition; to work, or to play; to take a music or a dancing lesson; or to engage in some other pursuit aside from their regular duties in school. Such scholars are the bane of any school: for they send forth their influence, poisoning its spirit, and seriously injuring its character.

PARENTAL CO-OPERATION.

The school and the home bear an intimate relation to each other. Each sustaining the other, gives and receives important influences. Each has its peculiar work. The school is

designed to help parents "train up" their children. Yet in order to do this, it must have their active co-operation. If they withhold this, their children cannot receive its full benefits. Parents should strive to shield the school from the injuries to which it is exposed by irregular and disorderly members, and lend it that kind of influence, which they wish to have brought into their families. If they would not feel

"How sharper than a serpent's tooth, it is
To have a thankless child,"

they must give their children good advice and instruction in relation to their conduct in school, and thus show them that they are deeply interested in their improvement and good character. They should check the exhibition of a fault-finding spirit, and encourage them to discharge their duties in school with a hearty good will. They should teach them to prize a good education above rubies, so that they may use the means to acquire it. In this way they will do them unspeakable good, and secure their lasting respect and gratitude. Thus inspired with a right spirit at home, and sent regularly to school, their children will improve their privileges as scholars, and prepare themselves for a more worthy discharge of their duties as moral and accountable beings.

A responsibility rests upon parents and guardians in relation to the character and usefulness of their school, from which they cannot escape. They can act with, or against the teacher: can prepare their children to receive or reject instruction: can cause or obviate the evils of unnecessary absence: can teach obedience, or disobedience; industry or idleness; honesty or dishonesty; truth or falsehood; can prepare their children to become good scholars or bad scholars; good citizens or bad citizens. May they realize their responsibility, and exercise their power for the welfare of their children, the prosperity of their schools, and the honor and blessing of society.

Very respectfully, yours, &c."

But there is a large class of children who frequent the streets, wharves, and Railroad Depots of our large towns and cities, that cannot be influenced by such means. They are principally the children of our foreign population, who are, for the most part, ignorant of the character of our institutions, and of the importance of education. The records of our Courts bear testimony to the fearful increase of crime among this class of children; and unless some efficient measures are soon adopted, they will corrupt the morals of all the youth in the land. Upwards of 200,000 men, women, and children landed upon our shores during the last year; and there is reason to believe that the number will hereafter be annually increased rather than

diminished. Hundreds of their children are growing up in ignorance and daily accustoming themselves to every species of vice. In this city the case is truly deplorable. In 1848 the city marshal was directed to obtain information as to the extent of the evil, and in a few weeks he reported the number of children between the ages of six years and sixteen who did not attend any school, that had come under the eyes of the police, to be 1066 ; of this number 963 were the children of foreign parents. The manner of obtaining this information was for the police officers to stop every child found in the streets during school hours, to accompany him home, and ascertain why he was not a member of any school. Doubtless, had the work been longer continued many hundreds more would have been added to the list. What an amount of youthful depravity is here presented ! Many of these children have since become the inmates of our Reform schools, and others are now growing up in vice and ignorance. What a field of labor is here presented to every friend of humanity ! Let us, then, endeavor to direct public sentiment aright upon the important subject. If we would do anything to stay the progress of crime we must commence at the fountain head. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." The Legislature of this Commonwealth in accordance with a petition of the Massachusetts State Teachers Association, have enacted a law upon this subject. Let the cities and towns accept the provisions of it, and with proper efforts on the part of teachers, this class of children may all be brought into the schools, and perhaps saved from a miserable and ignominious end.

MULTIPLICITY OF STUDIES IN SCHOOL.

BECAUSE improvements have been made in teaching, and because youth now acquire a greater amount of knowledge at a specified age, than was formerly attained, even at a much more advanced period of life, many of the community seem to entertain expectations altogether extravagant. It is needless to say that these expectations are seldom realized ; and whenever they are realized, it is often at the expense of the health and even the life of the youthful prodigy. Numerous instances have occurred within the observation of the writer, to verify this assertion. School committees, parents and teachers, seem to overlook the great law of nature, that all healthy growth, whether in the physical, moral, or intellectual world, must be gradual and in accordance with pre-established laws. The strength of the oak must be the result of many years ; the en-

larged humanity of Howard was the fruit of extensive observation, careful reflection, and oft-repeated self-denial; and the great genius of Newton or Laplace would never have been developed, without long-continued exertion and profound attention.

That the growth of the youthful intellect be vigorous and healthy, the energies must be exerted on few things at a time, and those few must be studied faithfully, and, at least, somewhat extensively. But such is not generally the case. There are, indeed, exceptions, and among the most decided exceptions in this country, may be mentioned the Military Academy at West Point. The course there embraces comparatively few branches for four years' study, but those branches are thoroughly learned. True, the Government of the Academy wields a power, which almost no other academical government has, or, at least, which almost no other presumes to exercise, the power to dismiss the indolent and inefficient. But, after all, concentration of energy is the most efficient means of success. Hence, the number of distinguished engineers and other eminent scientific men graduated at that institution.

But how is it with most of our colleges, academies, high and grammar schools, and even those of a lower grade, especially when these institutions depend upon popular favor for support? An array of studies is flourished abroad, sufficient to occupy one's life time; sometimes a single one of them would fill up three score years and ten; and the tyro is expected to master the whole in a year or two. Such a splendid prospectus promises a rich and varied harvest, but it most generally proves to be a crop from a sand bank. Indeed, these liberal promises ought to be regarded as *prima facie* evidence of inefficiency, as presumptive proof that the amount really learned, will be in the inverse ratio to the number of studies.

Let us look into the school-room, and see the operation of this multifarious system. The writer once visited an academy in which thirty recitations per day were heard by a single teacher; and they were just such recitations as might be expected,—absolutely nothing. The pupils were merely asked if they found any difficulties, and it may be inferred that they found very few, for it was asking the blind to distinguish colors, or the deaf to detect a discord in music. Under such a system, the learner is hurried from one thing to another; no time is left for reflection, no opportunity for research and investigation; truth and error are strangely confounded; what is attained, is learned by rote; and, what is most to be deplored, the youth imagines that he has sounded the whole depth of a subject, when his eye has merely floated over its surface. Hence, conceit, the offspring of ignorance, the bane of all progress, is early implanted in the mind, and can be eradicated only by severe disappointment and mortification. The effect upon the

teacher also is bad, especially if the same person has many branches to teach. He can neither devote the necessary time to self-preparation, nor expend sufficient labor in drilling to develop the abilities of his pupils. A smattering of the textbook is all that the pupil acquires, and the teacher's view is necessarily quite limited.

Now we do not object to learning many things, but we repudiate the idea that all can be profitably pursued at the same time, or that any considerable degree of acquaintance with all can be acquired in an inconsiderable space of time. Let so few studies be pursued at once, that the student may become interested in each, that he may study each understandingly, and so thoroughly as to strengthen his powers, and give him such knowledge as will be of real and lasting service to him.

But, it is said, children ought not to leave school without having learned something more than the commonest branches of education; and it is better to learn a little of many branches, than to be entirely ignorant of several of them. The correctness of such an assertion may well be doubted. This supposes that education terminates with the school-days, which may be, in a plurality of cases, practically true, but whenever true, it is a melancholy truth. Education, nay, book education, should be the business of life; and in this age and this country, there is no good reason why it should not be co-extensive with life. If, then, youth are to make progress in learning subsequently to leaving the school-room, will they be more inclined to carry on the work, after their curiosity has been sated by the knowledge of a few facts and elementary principles, after they have formed a vain conceit that they are masters of all good learning, or after they have acquired mental discipline and thorough knowledge as far as they have gone, and a conviction that there are many highly important and interesting branches of knowledge, of which they are as yet profoundly ignorant? Facts are good arguments; and in the most difficult branches of study, the writer has witnessed the most remarkable progress in pupils, who had never heard of those branches until they were called to grapple with them. But it should be remarked, that all the preliminary steps had been taken with care and a perfect knowledge of the way, so far as they had progressed. Careful and thorough study generates strength; the novelty and freshness of a subject gives zest; curiosity is awakened and gratified; but since the powers of digestion and assimilation are vigorous and active, the appetite is renewed, and the result is, not only health, but rapid growth of the intellectual man. In short, we would say, let education embrace many subjects; but let it not be forgotten, that there is a time for every thing, and that every thing worth learning requires its appropriate amount of time and attention. S.

DUKES COUNTY EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

The third annual and fifth semi-annual meeting of the Dukes County Educational Association, met at Chilmark on Friday, the 11th inst., and continued its sessions until the afternoon of the 12th. The attendance was uncommonly good, the exercises of a high order, and the best spirit prevailed throughout the meeting.

At 10 o'clock the President, Hon. Leavitt Thaxter, took the chair. The Rev. C. G. Hatch then offered prayer.

The 11th article of the Constitution was so amended as to read, "The Secretary, acting in the capacity of Librarian, shall carefully keep," &c.

It was then voted, That all persons present, not members, be invited to participate in the deliberations of the Association.

The Rev. Mr. Talbot being absent, the usual Associational Address was not delivered. On motion of S. B. Goodenow, it was voted to discuss the following question—"What are the duties of teachers to the parents of the children under their charge?"

After being ably discussed by Messrs. Thaxter, Goodenow, Slater, Demond, and Hatch, the question was laid on the table for further debate.

At the afternoon session, Mr. Briggs gave a lesson in English grammar; after which, some conversation took place between Mr. Thaxter and Mr. Briggs on the subject.

The assigned question—what is the best classification of nouns, as to their kinds—was then called for. Mr. Freeman Blake, in the absence of Rev. W. W. Hall, was assigned to take the part of the latter gentleman. The question was discussed by Messrs. Blake, Goodenow, A. Marchant, Thaxter, Hatch, and Seymour.

A lesson in Physiology was then given by Mr. Gifford.

Association adjourned to 7 o'clock, P. M.

At the opening of the evening session, the debate, on the duty of teachers to parents, was again renewed.

A lecture, on the subject of "Defective and Remedial Education," was then given by Mr. F. N. Blake. This was followed by appropriate remarks from Messrs. Demond, Thaxter, Hatch, H. Vincent, Pierce, and Goodenow. A copy of Mr. Blake's lecture was requested for publication, and a committee appointed to confer with him on the subject.

After singing, adjourned.

On Saturday, the Association met at 9 o'clock, A. M. Prayer was then offered by Rev. Mr. Demond.

It was voted, That the next semi-annual meeting be held in Edgartown.

Voted, That Rev. Mr. Demond be appointed to deliver the

next Associational Address, and that Mr. Constant Norton be his substitute.

The following gentlemen were then elected officers for the year ensuing :

Hon. Leavitt Thaxter, *President*.

Dr. John Pierce, Herman Vincent, Esq., and Dea. Nathan Mayhew, *Vice Presidents*.

Rev. Charles G. Hatch, *Secretary*.

Edgar Merchant, *Treasurer*.

The President of the Association, after the election of officers, indulged in some very appropriate remarks.

Voted, That the sum of \$15 be paid the former Secretary, (Mr. H. Vincent,) for his services.

An Essay, by a lady, on the subject of "Application to Study," was listened to with much interest.

It was voted, That the Association award five prizes, of \$5, \$4, \$3, \$2, and \$1, respectively, for the five best Essays, by female members, on the methods by which teachers may secure the best interests of their schools. Each Essay to occupy not less than ten, or more than fifteen minutes in the reading, and to be forwarded to the Secretary by the 1st of April next, accompanied by the author's name in a sealed envelope.

Said prizes are to be awarded in books, or some other token of merit equal to the amount, or in money, at the discretion of the following gentlemen, appointed a Committee for that purpose — L. Thaxter, S. B. Goodenow, Hebron Vincent.

In the afternoon, Messrs. Goodenow and Hatch, were appointed a committee, to confer with Mr. Blake, the lecturer, in preparing the work for the press, and it was voted that from 500 to 1000 copies be printed for gratuitous distribution.

Voted, That the thanks of the Association be tendered to the citizens of Chilmark for their generous and kind hospitality to the members of the Association in attendance from a distance, and for their zealous and constant attendance on the meetings of the Association.

The following questions were assigned for discussion at the next meeting :

I. Ought the provisions of the recent State Law, concerning Physiology in schools, to be carried into effect by the several towns? Dr. Pierce and Dea. Nathan Mayhew, debaters.

II. What is the best method of explaining how to multiply and divide by the figure one, connected with any number of ciphers. Debaters, S. B. Goodenow and Abraham Marchant.

It having been voted, that the Association be addressed by Messrs. Seymour and Swift — Mr. Seymour spoke on the necessity of order and proper government, in general, in schools; and Mr. Swift, on the subject of introducing into schools the teaching of drawing and sketching from nature. Adjourned.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

FROM time immemorial, the world has sought to educate the intellect. As if the mind or the spirit were a separate and an independent power or creation, accidentally accompanying the body, but having no share or lot in its strength or weakness, in its liabilities, responsibilities or condition. The world has sought to excite this spiritual essence to its greatest action, to impose upon it its greatest burdens, and to demand of it its utmost labor.

In this plan of education, the body is not included, nor is it usually even thought of: or if considered at all, it is commonly supposed, that it may be safely left to its own natural wants and appetites, and that the business, circumstances, and necessities of life would be sufficient to develope and sustain its powers.

Thus the mind is prepared for action; by instruction in various kinds of knowledge and by training in various ways, it is fitted to bear the burdens that may be laid upon it, and to fulfil the duties that may be required of it; while the body, the very dwelling of the mind, the brain, the very instrument by which it operates, the other organs by which the brain is sustained, are left unprepared for the burdens and duties which they must bear and perform.

The consequence is, the mind is prepared for its condition and life, and sustains itself, in those who do not require any considerable amount of mental action, while the body falters, and in almost all persons comes short of the entire fulfilment of its destiny. And among those whose purpose of life is exclusively mental action, the body being neglected and unsustained, the brain becomes enfeebled and consequently acts sometimes languidly, sometimes with uncertainty, or even fails to act at all.

A thorough examination of the nature of man shows, that all the powers belonging to him are mutually dependent, that the strength of the whole depends on the degree of the strength of each one, and that the power of each one depends on the degree of vigor of all the rest. If any one is weak, all the others suffer more or less.

Thus, if the stomach is weakened, the food is not easily and completely digested, nutrition is incomplete, consequently all the other organs, the lungs, the muscles, the brain, &c. are imperfectly nourished, and cannot therefore perform their duties with heathly vigor. So, also, if the lungs are diseased, or if one breathes impure air, the blood is not cleansed of its dead particles in the lungs, impure blood is thence sent back to the heart and from the heart to the whole body; the same consequences of imperfect nutrition, and comparative weakness and

languor follow in all the other organs, as flow from impaired digestion. In a similar manner universal depression of life follows disorder or weakness of any other organ. None can be perfect unless all the others, its co-workers in the general sustenance, are also perfect.

A connection, similar to this between the various physical organs and powers, is manifested between the physical and mental powers. If the brain is weak the mind is unable to work vigorously; if the brain is disordered the mind works irregularly and the moral affections are uncertain and perhaps perverse; if the brain is oppressed as in apoplexy, the mind is torpid and its actions are suspended.

It is in vain then to endeavor to educate and develop one organ unless the others also are strengthened, or to expect that one can be kept in regular action unless the others perform their parts with due vigor and regularity. A complete system of education then must include the developement and the training of all the powers, those of the body as well as those of the mind.

The developement and training of the mind, in manifold ways, has been fully and ably discussed, explained and established. The mind has been analyzed, and all the various mental and moral faculties examined, and those means, studies and appliances which will best develop and strengthen them, have been determined and used in education.

A similar analysis of the body and examination of the physical organs also are wanted, in order to understand their character and their relations, their wants, and the limits and extent of their powers; and the law of the human constitution should then be so explained and set forth, that children and youth may learn that which is necessary for their future self-government.

The great purpose of all education is to prepare the child or the youth to meet the responsibilities of life, to bear all the burdens that shall be imposed upon him, and discharge all the duties that shall be required of him in his future manhood.

This implies a consideration of the responsibilities and duties of life, to ascertain what are those which come upon men, what is their relative importance, what of these are inevitable, what are universal, and what are partial and avoidable. It is manifestly proper, that in making preparation, we should first prepare for that which we must certainly meet, and next for that which is the most important to be borne or discharged; and when we shall have made ready for these, we may, if we have time and opportunity, prepare for such responsibilities as come but occasionally, or on but a part of mankind, and for those which are of less importance to be sustained.

Upon this principle should all plans of education be arranged.

We should take into view first the organs, powers, and faculties of man, those which belong to his constitution and nature, and then the purposes to which they are to be applied and the objects which are to be effected by them.

In the usual plans of education, the first idea is that a man is to acquire knowledge, and therefore reading is the first thing taught. As language is ordinarily the instrument or the means of this acquisition, it very properly takes precedence of all other studies. The communication of knowledge ranks next in common estimation, and therefore writing is taught soon after reading or simultaneous with it. Then grammar, or the correct analysis of language, is early taught, to enable the scholar to convey his own ideas intelligibly, and to readily understand the language of others. Geography, to prepare one with a knowledge of various parts of the earth in order that he may do business or read with understanding the accounts of other places and nations; and arithmetic, to enable one to calculate and buy and sell correctly, are ranked among the essential elements of common education.

With these various kinds of knowledge, the man is supposed to be fitted for the chances and duties of life. They are indeed essential to the greatest usefulness and the highest enjoyments of life; but they are not absolutely necessary to existence on earth. The chances and contingencies that require the use of these kinds of knowledge do not come to all men; none of them are inevitable to any one; they may be and are avoided by many: and, at most, they come upon only a part of mankind, and upon them only a part of the time.

But the responsibilities that are connected with the body, the advantages to be gained by a knowledge of its structure and action, and faithfulness to its laws, and the disadvantages that flow from an ignorance and neglect of its laws and conditions, are universal and permanent. They come upon every man and woman, and abide with them through life. They can be escaped or avoided or diminished at no time, and in no day, from the beginning to the end of earthly existence.

Each man is appointed to take care of his own body. Several of the organs of which his body is composed and by which his life is sustained are left partially or entirely to his charge. These are the organs of digestion, respiration and circulation, the bones and muscles, the brain and nervous systems and the skin. All of these have certain wants to be supplied or certain powers to be used; and the man himself, their owner and enjoyer, is the appointed one to supply these wants and to appropriate these powers.

This is so inevitable to all, that life and health hang upon the discharge of this responsibility. According to the manner in

which each one eats, drinks, and breathes, cares for his skin, and uses his bones, muscles and brain, is his life full, and vigorous, joyous, and protracted, or feeble, painful, and short. If he does these things intelligibly, and faithfully, agreeably to the law of his nature ; if his nutriment is exactly adapted to his powers of digestion and the wants of his body, if he always breathes pure air, if he bathes and clothes himself properly, if the exercise of his brain, and his locomotive apparatus are just what these systems need, and no more than they can bear, then health in a high degree is enjoyed, strength is ever at command, and life is well sustained and prolonged. But, on the other hand, in as far as a man is faithless to this law of life, he is weak and sick ; he has not the command of his powers, and his earthly existence is shortened. In this matter the reward immediately follows and inevitably follows the obedience, and the blessing attends each virtue. On the contrary the punishment is irreparably connected with the neglect of duty, and with the disobedience to the law of life.

This connection between the right or wrong administration of our organs and powers, and health or sickness, strength or weakness, is as certain as cause and effect, as that between any causes and their consequences in nature.

The will or the intention has nothing to do with the result. Whether a man neglects or errs from ignorance of the law or from wilful resistance to its commands, the punishment follows in the same manner and degree ; it has regard only to the amount and kind of disobedience, and not to the motive or will of the sufferer.

Because this knowledge of the condition of the present being, this practical science of popular physiology has been rarely taught, men have generally been left to their appetites and propensities, their views of worldly interest, to guide them in their self-management ; and consequently the law of physical life has been almost universally disobeyed, to a greater or less extent ; and thus the measure of life here, in its fulness or in its continuance, is very materially diminished in nearly, perhaps quite, the whole of mankind. In Massachusetts, with about a million of inhabitants, according to the calculation founded on the experience of the Health Insurance Companies, there are twenty-six thousand persons between the ages of fifteen and seventy constantly sick. This covers the entire productive period of a man's life. This State thus loses every year the enormous amount of twenty-six thousand years of productive service, on account of sickness. Massachusetts is supposed to be among the most healthy countries. Others probably have more sickness than even this. Very much of this defect of life — of the sickness, weakness and ill health of mankind, would be prevented, if men in

their early years, were as well prepared to administer their powers of body as they are to administer their estates — if they were as well taught in physiology, as they are in geography and arithmetic.

The preparation for this self-care implies neither a knowledge of the comparative physiology of various animals, nor a study of the minutiae of anatomy. It is necessary to understand the general structure of those organs which are subject to man's control, or affected by his management. These are the organs of nutrition, respiration, of locomotion, the skin, and the brain and nervous system. But the physiology of these organs and systems, their actions, wants, powers, and uses, must necessarily be more extensively examined.

The practical applications of these laws to the manifold chances of life, the way in which and the degree to which they are affected by the various circumstances of the world, the infinite variety of duties in respect to them, according to varying contingencies, require a far greater study than the anatomy and physiology of the system.

Thus, in studying the locomotive system, it is needful to learn the general character, strength, and arrangement of the bones; the general structure and connections and actions of the muscles. Beside this, we should learn the relations of these organs to the others, as the effect of muscular action on digestion of food, and the effect of various kinds of food on muscular action; the effect of bathing, clothing, and perspiration; of the condition of the lungs and of respiration; of the various states of the brain, of the mind, the feelings, and passions, on the power of labor; the effect of protracted or interrupted action; of rest and sleep; of over exertion and of inaction; of day and of night labor. All these, in their manifold varieties, are to be learned, in order to fully understand the laws and responsibilities connected with the organs of locomotion.

All the other systems are to be learned in this manner, and thus one may be prepared to use his powers and organs for their legitimate purposes—to maintain his health and strength, and increase his enjoyments to the highest degree, and prolong his present life to its fullest extent.

There are other and different views taken of this subject. Some propose to teach a wide range of physiological science. Thus, in respiration, they explain the respiratory apparatus and its mode of action in the various classes of animals. In the same manner, and to the same extent, they teach the structure and action of the other organs. By this means, students may become naturalists, but they consume so much time in acquiring this wide range of anatomical and physiological knowledge, that comparatively little or none is left for the study of the special

application of the laws of human life to the chances and the responsibilities of human action, and thus the very object of this popular physiology is neglected, in the ambitious attempt to become extensively learned in science.

Some prefer to teach anatomy more minutely, and for this purpose their books describe the individual muscles and the blood vessels and nerves in their multiplied ramifications, and have numerous engravings to correspond.

There is something very taking in this method of teaching this science. It seems to convey a depth of knowledge, and to reveal the hidden intricacies of the human body, and thus the pupil is flattered with the hope of becoming a scientific scholar.

There arises an objection to this system similar to that which was offered to the extensive study of physiology, its uselessness and the want of time.

There is necessarily a limit to the amount of time and attention that can be devoted to any of these studies by the general student; and yet there is seemingly no limit to the range of anatomical or physiological science that may be learned. It is therefore necessary to make a selection of those topics which are most intelligible to the scholar, which will be remembered, and are applicable to purposes of life.

The general scholars, the pupils in common schools and academies, all who do not intend to become physicians or surgeons, stand in need of some knowledge of physiology. Their object is not to become men of science, but to gain that knowledge which will teach them how to manage the organs entrusted to their care, and how to appropriate their powers of body or mind so as to secure for themselves the greatest health and the longest life.

If, therefore, they spend the time and attention which is allotted to this subject, in the study of comparative physiology or of minute anatomy, they have little or none left to study that practical application, which will secure them in after life, against the errors and ailments that fall so commonly upon men. And though they may become learned naturalists or anatomists, they yet remain in want of that knowledge of the law of life which will be useful to him, and serve to guide them in their future self-management.

The only way in which this science can be profitably taught to the general student, and the only way he can advantageously learn it, is with the view to its application to the government of his life. This would include the general anatomy of those organs that are entrusted to his care, and only so much of this as is requisite to the understanding of their actions, powers and wants, or the physiological law which he needs to learn; and lastly, the relation of these organs and of his whole frame to all the chances and exposures of life. This will comprehend as

much as the pupils or even the general scholars will have time to study, as much as they can understand, and certainly all that they will find useful in fulfilling their duties of the present being.

It is important in all instruction, and especially in teaching a new science, that it be clothed in the most natural and simple language, that the learners be not burdened with strange words, and that the ideas be so clearly presented, that he who runs may read, or he that reads may understand. The common scholar can gain no advantage from learning the scientific terms of Latin or Greek, which represent objects that have common English names. This is not merely a negative evil, but it is positive; for, that mental labor which might be advantageously devoted to understanding the nature and character of the *wind-pipe* is, in part at least, taken up and wasted in understanding the meaning of *trachea*, when the same idea is given under this Latin name.

Certainly, when the language of any book is so clear and transparent, that nothing seems to stand between the learner's mind and the author's ideas, these can be transferred from the one to the other, much more easily than when the student hesitates at the meaning of words, and sometimes is obliged to consult a dictionary.

This plan of the study of popular physiology and its application to active life, or rather physiology and hygiea combined, is less pretending than others. There is in it less show of learning, and it seems to promise less to the teacher and the scholar; consequently, some who are desirous of making large acquisitions in a new science, or who consider new and strange facts as practical wisdom, may be turned from this and be drawn to other plans. But those who look to the future and practical objects of this science, and are content to study it as a law that shall guide them in the fulfilment of their responsibilities in life, will look for those facts and those principles that shall thus teach them this law of self-management, rather than for the barren learning of useless facts and inapplicable principles. E.

THE DIGNITY OF LABOR

Is a subject which is very much overlooked. Our system of education, excellent as it is in many respects, is faulty in this point. The prizes held out to the young mind are not those which are to be gained by physical toil united with and guided by mental energy. Children, young men, are not encouraged to put their hands to the plough and the spade; to the cultivation of the soil; to the improvement of agriculture. They are not told that this, of all pursuits, is the most natural to man; the most dignified, the surest in its results; but they are taught to aspire to some higher position, — as if any other were higher; to spend their best energies over the midnight lamp, to exhaust all their powers of body and mind in the acquisition of that sort of knowledge which shall qualify them to become “professional men;” lawyers, physicians, preachers. This false view of life is not, perhaps, inculcated by our public teachers, but neither is it checked by them. It takes its rise under the parental roof, where every boy who indicates the possession of ordinary faculties, is held by his fond parents to be a prodigy, and destined by them to shine with a brilliant lustre among his fellows in after life; to become a leading star — an ornament to society, a guide to his fellow men. He is taught to believe that the occupation of his father is undignified — that it may do for ordinary minds, but is beneath such a capacity as he possesses; that physical toil is vulgar, that the true marks of a gentleman are white hands, kid gloves, and a “profession;” that a farmer, especially, is, and of right should be, a dull, plodding animal, just the lowest grade of humanity; who is fit for nothing else but to till the earth, and who is just fit for that because he is fit for nothing else; and these absurdities, if they are not encouraged, are not checked in the school room, the academy or the college.

Reformation is needed in this matter, else all our brightest and best, to say nothing of those who are only supposed to belong to that class, will be drawn from the noble pursuit of agriculture and induced to waste themselves in a vain struggle for pre-eminence in other pursuits, wherein a thousand fail to one who succeeds. But reformation is needed for another reason. The “professions” are all overstocked with students and teachers; science is pursued in all directions but the most important, and applied to all subjects but the right one. The ingenuity of the human race is exhausted in its endeavors to make cloth by some easier and cheaper mode; but nothing is done to test the capacity of the earth and compel it to yield an increased production of bread and fruit. The great

reservoir from which all our prosperity must ever flow, is left to its own care, while every channel that leads from it is freed from obstructions and increased in capacity. This is all wrong. The careful, industrious cultivator of the soil is always sure of a living while he has land and health; of a living at least, in any and all times — generally of something more; and of what other pursuit or occupation can so much be said? How important, then, that science should be compelled to lend her aid to this glorious pursuit, thereby to render it still more productive and useful to the great human family!

We have become a great nation. We have increased in numbers and in wealth beyond any precedent in history; and to what do we owe our greatness? An eloquent English writer says, "The pride of America is the pride of successful toil; not the toil of conquest; not the struggles for empire; not the efforts of grasping ambition; *but the humblest toil of the humblest manhood*; — the toil of the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. Hence, to guard the struggling against insult, and the successful against detraction, may be called the chivalry of America. It is the great feature of its social system. It is the dear bought hereditary honor which its people seek to guard. He who would sneer at any man for his honest calling in America, would but bring himself social martyrdom; and the man who would be ashamed of the calling by which he rose, would find most men ashamed to recognize him." This writer has answered our question. We owe our greatness to "*successful toil*;" and if we would retain the position we have grasped, more especially if we would advance in wealth and greatness, it must be done by the same means. But why has our toil been successful? Simply because it has been directed by intelligence; because the mind of America has lent its aid to the hands of America; and both have worked together zealously, not for a landlord or a master, but for individual self. Because we have in some sort appreciated the *dignity of labor*. The great cause of fear, and it is that which we would guard against, is, that our children shall be taught to look with contempt upon the means by which their fathers rose. That such a feeling exists, that it is increasing in breadth and strength, is obvious to any keen observer. That it should be checked, if possible eradicated, is no less clear. Parents should inculcate upon the minds of children the value and the dignity of labor, and teachers should do their part of the work. Children should ever be taught not to call upon others to do for them what they are able to do for themselves. Cultivation of the soil should be presented to the young mind as the highest, the most dignified vocation of man; a vocation to which all others owe their existence, by which all others live; — a vocation which affords employ not for the hands

only, but for the head, the heart and mind ; a vocation upon which genius may labor and science may expend its treasures for ages with benefit to the human race ; a vocation which strengthens the physical and enlarges the mental powers of a man, however strong — however great he may be.

We desire to see the present course of things changed. Instead of drawing away the best minds from the best of pursuits, we desire to see these minds so educated that they will turn back again to the soil and expend their genius and their science and their energy in rendering that more productive. Labor, in any honest calling is honorable, but more honorable, more dignified than all other, is labor, guided by intelligence, cultivating the earth.

SCHOOL HOURS.

CHILDREN in towns and cities where annual schools are kept go to school too much both for their mental and physical good. They commence at too early an age, and are confined too steadily to their tasks. It is not strange that they become listless and inanimate ; that they too often regard the school room as a prison house, and their teacher as a cruel task master. We dwarf and enfeeble the intellect by this constant pressure. The great and good men who have preceded us in life — bright and shining lights in their day and generation — were not thus tasked in their youth, and even in their infancy. The good old fashioned District Schools have produced giant intellects even in our own time. Children then worked and played in the open air a part of the year, and went to school the remainder to study and to learn ; and while we would not advocate a return to the old system of "six months' schooling" in the year, we cannot refrain from expressing the opinion, that children now go to school too much. The consequence is that we are rearing a puny, feeble, sickly generation ; and well will it be for them, if they do not grow up as feeble in intellect as in body. Three hours in a day, or four at the most, is enough for close mental application even for adults. Children should go to school in the morning, but not in the afternoon. In the morning the body has been strengthened and invigorated by sleep, and the mind is fresh and active for study ; but in the afternoon it is not so. Then children are restless, impatient and idle. It is then that school discipline becomes difficult. Children require time for recreation and amusement every day. More than half their waking hours should be thus appropriated ; and if sufficient time

be not allowed *out of the school*, there will be trouble and confusion *in the school*. Let the people of this or any other city or town, where annual schools are kept, but try the experiment of having the schools keep only one session in a day for one year, and the custom would be established forever. They would never return to the present method.

THE MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Will hold its next annual meeting at Worcester, the session to commence on the evening of Monday, the 25th of November, and to continue through the succeeding day and evening. Lectures are expected from several distinguished Teachers, and, as time will permit, interesting and important subjects will be brought up for discussion. The interest felt by the members of this Association in the cause of Education, has been constantly on the increase, since its first formation; and it is to be hoped and presumed, that the ensuing session will fully attest that interest. Teachers and other friends of Education are cordially invited to attend the meeting.

THOMAS SHERWIN, *President*.

Boston, Nov. 1, 1850.

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE.

SUBSCRIBERS are reminded that the next number of the *Teacher* closes the yearly volume; and that one dollar and a half will be required in liquidation of subscriptions remaining unpaid after the issue of that number, agreeably to the terms of subscription.

The friends of the work are also earnestly reminded, that the present (before the commencement of a new Volume,) is a favorable opportunity of aiding in the circulation of the work, by extending a knowledge of it to others, and inviting their subscriptions. Will they not do so, and thus aid the cause of education generally?